

A  
SKETCH  
OF THE  
HISTORY AND THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION  
OF  
BROWN UNIVERSITY.

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PUBLISHED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

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This Institution, which was founded in 1764, owes its origin to the desire of the Baptists in the American Colonies to secure for members of their denomination a liberal education, without subjection to any sectarian tests. At the suggestion of the Rev. Morgan Edwards, the Pastor of the First Baptist church in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, in the year 1762, resolved to establish a College in the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, where Roger Williams had first recognized the principle, and enjoyed the blessings of "soul liberty;" and where, "because the legislature was chiefly in the hands of the Baptists, was therefore the likeliest place to have a Baptist College established by law." The Rev. James Manning, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, was commissioned by them to travel through the Northern Colonies, for the purpose of furthering this project.

In the year 1763, Mr. Manning visited Newport, then the most flourishing commercial town of the Colony of Rhode Island. He was very cordially received by Gardner, the Deputy Governor, and several prominent



citizens. The subject he had come to present was not altogether a new one to their minds; for the spirit of religious toleration, and the large and liberal views which had characterized the Colony from its beginning, had already awakened in them the desire for a seminary of learning, which should be conducted on the principles Mr. Manning proposed. His visit served to strengthen this desire, and to give definiteness to their purposes and plans.

In 1764, a charter for the College was obtained from the Legislature of the Colony. Its chief provisions were: the exclusion of all religious tests for applicants for admission, and of all sectarian teachings in the College course; equality of privileges for all Protestant denominations; the choice of Professors without regard to denominational views; and government by a President of Baptist sentiments, and by a Board of Fellows and a Board of Trustees, in which, though the Baptists were to have the predominance, other denominations in the colony were to be fairly represented. Of the twelve Fellows, eight, including the President, were to be Baptists; and of the thirty-six Trustees, twenty-two were to be Baptists; five, Friends; four, Congregationalists; and five, Episcopalians. The corporate name of the Institution was to be, "The College or University in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England, in America," until it should be honored with that of some eminent benefactor—an anticipation in due time happily fulfilled.

In 1765, Mr. Manning, who had in the mean time become the Pastor of a church in Warren, a town on the eastern side of Narragansett Bay, and had opened a Latin school there, was elected President of the College.



Being empowered to act "at Warren or elsewhere," he at once began the work of instruction at his place of residence. In the following year, Mr. David Howell, a graduate of the College of New Jersey, who was afterwards honored with high political and judicial trusts in the State of his adoption, became Mr. Manning's assistant.

As funds were needed, both for the support of the Instructors, and for the ultimate erection of a suitable College building, Mr. Edwards, in 1767, visited England and Ireland, for the purpose of soliciting aid. His subscription paper, bearing the honored names of Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin West, may still be seen in the College archives. Collections for the same purpose were made in South Carolina and Georgia, and in the Philadelphia churches. The first Commencement was celebrated at Warren, in 1769, when seven young men were graduated. A contemporary account preserves the interesting facts, that both the President and the candidates were dressed in clothing of American manufacture, and that the audience, composed of many of the first ladies and gentlemen of the Colony, behaved with great decorum.

The four principal towns of the Colony, Newport, Providence, Warren and East Greenwich, now appeared as rival claimants for the honor of becoming the site of the building which it was proposed to erect for the College. It was promised to the largest contributor to the building fund, and was secured by Providence. The subsequent history of the Institution has given its friends reason to congratulate themselves on this result. In 1770, the foundation of "University Hall," the oldest of the four buildings of the College, was laid. The spot

selected for it was the crest of a hill which then commanded a view of the bay, the river, with the town on its banks, and a broad reach of country on all sides. Now that the buildings of the city have crept up the hill, and, gathering round the College grounds, have stretched out far beyond them, thus shutting out the nearer prospect, the eye can still take in, from the top of "University Hall," the same varied and beautiful landscape which once constituted one of the chief attractions of the site.

During a portion of the revolutionary period, from 1777 to 1782, the College was disbanded, and a gap occurs in its history. Some of the students entered the army; others completed their studies elsewhere. The dormitories and recitation-rooms were surrendered to the use of the State militia, and to the sick and wounded of our French allies. In 1786, President Manning, whose graceful deportment, elegant scholarship, and wise and Christian character had commended him to all his fellow-citizens, was appointed to represent the State of Rhode Island in the Congress of the United States. In 1791, he died, lamented by all classes, and by none more than by the graduates of the College, of which he was the real founder, and which owed to him its guidance and its prosperity.

President Manning was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Maxcy, who, during the previous year, had held the temporary appointment of Professor of Divinity, in anticipation of succeeding to the Presidency. For ten uneventful years, Dr. Maxcy was at the head of the College. In 1802, he became President of Union College, and in 1804, President of the College of South Carolina.

The Rev. Asa Messer succeeded Dr. Maxcy in the Presidency of Rhode Island College, and held this office until 1826. It was in the early part of his administration, that the College received its present name of "Brown University." In 1804, Mr. Nicholas Brown, a member of a family already celebrated in the annals of the State for its public spirit and its mercantile integrity and enterprise, and a graduate of the College under the Presidency of Dr. Manning, having already given to the Library a valuable collection of Law books, presented to the Corporation the sum of \$5,000, as the foundation of a Professorship of Oratory and Belles Lettres. It was thereupon voted, that the College be thenceforward styled Brown University, in honor of its most distinguished benefactor. This was, however, but the beginning of Mr. Brown's benefactions to the University which bears his honored name. In 1821-2, a second building, for the accommodation of the increasing number of students, was erected at his sole expense, and at his suggestion named "Hope College," after his only sister, Mrs. Hope Ives.

In 1826-7, Dr. Messer was succeeded by the Rev. Francis Wayland, D. D. The period of Dr. Wayland's Presidency was marked by greater changes and more numerous improvements in the condition of the College, than had been effected by either of his predecessors. In its earlier years, the course of study was enlarged; the standard of scholarship was raised; the number of Professorships was increased; the discipline became more rigid; and sharing in the President's high aspirations and earnest enthusiasm for sound learning and thorough study, the Professors and the students labored with a spirit worthy of their leader. For more than a

quarter of a century, Dr. Wayland was identified with the interests of the College. He stamped it with the impress of his own lofty character. His pupils partook of his intense moral earnestness and high and severe sense of moral obligation, and went forth into life with the exalted aims and studious habits, which he both encouraged and illustrated.

Under Dr. Wayland's auspices, the Library—now one of the chief boasts of the College—may be said to have been first established on a permanent basis. The rudiments of a Library had indeed been secured through the endeavors of Mr. Edwards, the early friend and agent of the University. To these had been added books purchased by subscriptions, in which the Brown family had been largely represented, donations from the Bristol Education Society of England, and legacies from eminent friends of the Institution. Of the latter, the most interesting and valuable was the Library of the Rev. William Richards, LL. D., of Lynn, England. It is rich in Welsh books, and in rare pamphlets and larger works relating to the history and antiquities of England and Wales. In 1831, began the subscription to what is known as the Library fund. It amounted to \$19,437, of which \$10,000 were from the same munificent hand to which the College had been so largely indebted. This sum was invested, and since 1839, when its accumulated interest had raised it to \$25,000, it has furnished an annual dividend for the steady increase of the Library, and the purchase of Philosophical apparatus.

The room in "University Hall" in which the books were kept, was already too strait for them. To provide a suitable place for their deposit, the Hon. Nicholas Brown, at his own expense, in 1834, erected a beautiful



building for a Library and a Chapel, to which he gave the name of "Manning Hall," in honor of his Instructor, the first President of the University. The Library has, since then, received large and frequent accessions from Mr. John Carter Brown, (the surviving son of the Hon. Nicholas Brown, who, in this respect, follows in the footsteps of his father;) from the late Moses B. Ives, Esq., and from numerous other graduates; among whom is chiefly to be mentioned the Hon. Theron Metcalf, of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, whose unique collection of Pamphlet Sermons and Addresses furnishes to the student of the ecclesiastical history of New England an invaluable stock of materials.

In 1840, "Rhode Island Hall," built by the subscriptions of Rhode Island men and Rhode Island women, for the Geological Cabinet and for the lectures in Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, was added to the other College edifices. At the same time, the "President's House" was removed from the College enclosure; the grounds were laid out and planted with elms, and a new house for the President was erected opposite their main entrance.

But favored as Brown University was by the munificence of its friends and patrons; strict as was its discipline; and thorough as was the instruction its Professors gave, it did not realize the ideal formed by the earnest and practical mind of its President. The number of its students did not increase; and with its enlarged expenditure, it was not self-supporting. Despairing of improvement so long as the existing system was perpetuated, Dr. Wayland, in 1849, resigned the Presidency. He, however, consented to reconsider his purpose. His views of the needs of the College, and of

the times were presented to the Corporation, and adopted by them; and it was resolved to attempt to raise a fund for the purpose of realizing his theory of education. One hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars were cheerfully subscribed; and what is called "the New System" commenced. Its main features were, the provision of such new courses of study in science as the practical spirit of the age demanded; the abandonment of a fixed term of four years of study for students, and in place of it the pursuit of any selected course for such a length of time as the student's circumstances required; the privilege of selecting such studies as the student desired, and of pursuing such, and as many studies, as, under the guidance of his guardians, he might wish; the adjustment of the Bachelor's and the Master's Degree, so as to represent a difference of attainment, such Degrees being conferred on candidates producing certificates of proficiency in certain prescribed and sometimes interchangeable studies, and passing a special examination on some additional study; and the guaranty of a fixed salary to each Professor, to which should be added such sums as resulted from the sale of tickets to his lectures, the relative amount being thus determined somewhat by the attractiveness of his department. From 1850 to 1855, the College was carried on under this system, with but slight modifications. The Degree of A. B. was conferred on students who had pursued prescribed studies, which represented a course of three years. The Degree of A. M. was conferred, not in course, but on those whose prescribed studies represented a four years course. The Degree of Bachelor of Philosophy was given to proficients in certain appointed scientific

studies. Instruction was given in practical sciences. The number of students greatly increased. A new impulse was given to the College.

In 1855, Dr. Wayland, wearied with the cares of a long and honored Presidency, having inaugurated his cherished plan of Collegiate instruction, resigned his office of President.

The Rev. Barnas Sears, D. D., a graduate of the College, was elected his successor. Dr. Sears had been long known as an Educator. He had for many years been a Professor in a Theological Institution in Newton, Mass. At the time of his election, he was the Secretary of the Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts, in which office he presided over the admirable public school system of that Commonwealth. He brought to his new office the fruits of his studies in this country and in Europe, and a long and varied experience in the work of education and of academic government.

Under his administration, the system introduced by his predecessor has been considerably modified. The increased opportunities for practical education are still offered. But inasmuch as it was found that, while the whole number of students in the partial course increased, those who pursued a full course diminished,—361 students having entered in the years 1850–54, while only 108 were graduated in the full course in the years 1854–8,—it was thought expedient to abandon the three years course for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, and to diminish the prominence of the partial course. The course of study for academic degrees has therefore returned to its former order and limits. The Bachelor's Degree in arts is given at the end of four years of prescribed study; the Master's Degree is conferred in



course ; the Baccalaureate in Philosophy is retained as originally prescribed.

A plan has been adopted and is in a course of successful execution for the encouragement and relief of meritorious students who may need pecuniary aid. A fund derived from a bequest made to the University by the Hon. Nicholas Brown, has been applied by the Corporation to the founding of eleven scholarships, paying sixty dollars a year each, called the Nicholas Brown Scholarships. This number has been more than doubled through the agency of the Rev. Horace T. Love. His efforts in this behalf are still to be continued. An "Aid Fund" of \$5,000, for the benefit of students who may need help in smaller sums, has been recently established, through the munificence of a lady in a neighboring town. Arrangements for reducing the price of board have been made, in order that students of limited pecuniary resources, who wish to enter this College, may not be repelled by the expense of living in a city.

The University at present has, besides the mansion house for the President, four College buildings or halls, viz : University Hall, built in 1770, of brick, four stories high, 150 feet long and 46 feet wide, containing 58 rooms for officers and students ; Hope College, built in 1822, of brick, four stories high, 120 feet long and 40 wide, containing 48 rooms ; Manning Hall, built in 1834, of stone covered with cement, 90 feet in length by 42 in width, two stories high, containing the Library room and the Chapel ; and Rhode Island Hall, built in 1840, of stone covered with cement, 70 feet long by 42 wide, containing two lecture-rooms with apparatus, an ample hall for the cabinet of mineralogy, geology, &c., and, in the basement, a chemical laboratory.

Subscriptions for a new fire-proof Library building, and for a large Laboratory, are in progress and have advanced far towards their completion ; one of the subscriptions for the former and a kindred object amounting to \$25,000.

Besides the regular undergraduate course, there is provision for thorough and extended instruction in analytical and practical chemistry, and also a course in Civil Engineering. In addition to the department of *general* chemistry, with its Professor, who gives instructions by lecture during half the year, there is a separate laboratory for analytical chemistry, with a Professor and an assistant.

The course of instruction, in this department, is not limited in its aim or scope, but is intended to meet the wants of agriculturists, manufacturers, physicians, pharmacutists, metallurgists and all students of material nature.

Any person who can pursue the study with advantage, and conforms to the rules of the department, may be admitted as a special student. Undergraduates may, by permission, pursue a course of study in the Laboratory, with certain limitations and restrictions.

The great progress which the science of chemistry has made within the past few years, and the important and intimate relations which it now sustains to the other natural sciences, to the arts and manufactures and to nearly all the operations of practical life, demand enlarged advantages for students in that department. It is moreover believed that the city of Providence, surrounded by so many flourishing manufactories, offers remarkable facilities for building up a school of practical chemistry.

It is for the better accommodation of this department that a new and more spacious Laboratory is to be erected, in which provision will be made for any expansion that may be called for.

The College grounds, including, in all, more than fourteen acres, are, in the vicinity of the buildings, graded and adorned with trees, (the greater part of which are omitted in the accompanying engraving.) The invested Funds of the College, including the Library Fund, amounted, before the recent subscriptions, to about \$208,000.

The College Library contains 30,000 carefully selected volumes, including a very rich collection of rare pamphlets. The society libraries present, in addition, an aggregate of 6,000 volumes. The last Triennial Catalogue, published in 1860, gives the entire number of graduates as 2,043, of whom 1,256 are now living. Of this number of graduates, 537 have been ordained as ministers, of whom 342 are now living.

The present number of undergraduates, according to the annual catalogue for 1860-1, is 232. Of these, 45 are pursuing a partial course, the remainder being candidates for the regular degree of Bachelor of Arts. The academic year is divided into two terms, the first beginning on the first Wednesday in September, and continuing twenty weeks; the second beginning three weeks after the close of the first, (about the middle of February,) and continuing twenty weeks,—to about the second week in July. A recess of one week occurs in the middle of each term. The annual Commencement is on the first Wednesday of September.

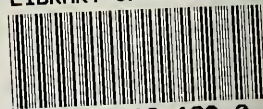
In the order and the course of study, Brown University does not now differ essentially from her sister Col-

leges of the United States. Her Faculty consists of a President, who is also Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, and nine Professors. A Librarian and a Registrar complete her list of officers. Retaining all that the times called for, and all that she found worthy in her "New System," she proceeds, as of old, on the well-tried basis of a sound and thorough Christian, Classical and Scientific culture; and offers and gives to her pupils an education in keeping with the spirit in which she was founded, and with the intentions of those who have enriched her with their munificence, and cherished her with their love.





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